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DE RUEHNE #1212/01 1621759

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

O 111759Z JUN 09

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6955

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 8159

RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 1774

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC

RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 001212

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: UNDERSECRETARY BURNS AND FOREIGN MINISTER KRISHNA
AGREE "SKY'S THE LIMIT" FOR THE U.S.-INDIA PARTNERSHIP

¶1. (SBU) Summary. In his first meeting with Minister for External Affairs S.M. Krishna, visiting Under Secretary for Political Affairs Bill Burns outlined opportunities to expand the bilateral relationship as it enters the next phase. Foreign Secretary Menon and Indian Ambassador to the U.S. Meera Shankar also attended the June 10 meeting, providing background information to the new Minister, who assumed his post last month. Krishna avoided delving into regional issues but pledged that the GOI remained committed to ensuring "continuity and stability" in South Asia and had no "territorial ambitions."

¶2. (SBU) Participants, including Assistant Secretary Bob Blake, Charge d'Affaires Peter Burleigh, and Deputy Director for Policy Planning Derek Chollet, focused on how each government could leverage the political milestones reached during their respective elections to propel the bilateral relationship forward, especially in the areas of educational exchanges and clean energy. Krishna warmly welcomed the upcoming visit of Secretary Clinton and reiterated Prime Minister Singh's invitation to President Obama to visit India at his earliest convenience. End Summary.

Regional Goals: Continuity and Stability

¶3. (SBU) Krishna reported that the newly elected government intended to promote continuity and stability in the region. He lamented that India had "already been subjected to so much terror." Burns assured Krishna that President Obama remained committed to encouraging stability in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, adding that India's participation was essential to achieving our common goals. Burns expressed appreciation for the GOI's contributions in Afghanistan, particularly in the areas of law enforcement training and agricultural assistance.

¶4. (SBU) Regarding the aftermath of the war in Sri Lanka, Krishna underscored the GOI's immediate concern for the resettlement of over 250,000 IDPs. Burns assured Krishna we would continue to work with India to send a unified message to the Sri Lankan leadership. Both Burns and Krishna agreed the U.S. and India should continue to "quietly collaborate" on this issue.

Seizing the Post-Election Moment

¶5. (SBU) Burns and Krishna agreed that the U.S. and India should "seize the moment" after each government won a strong mandate in their respective elections. The U.S. and India would build on the success of the civil nuclear cooperation

agreement. Krishna stressed that President Obama has a "large number of admirers in this country" and praised the President's recent Cairo speech. Burns relayed that during Secretary Clinton's upcoming visit she hoped to tap into the full potential of the strategic partnership through a strengthened bilateral framework, ranging from counterterrorism cooperation to educational exchanges. Burns underscored that while the U.S. would continue to develop a healthy relationship with China, the U.S.-India relationship was a top foreign policy priority for President Obama. He affirmed that the U.S. aims to nurture a "variety of strong relationships."

¶6. (U) Krishna, a Fulbright alum, praised the recent expansion of the U.S.-India Fulbright program and expressed hope that further educational partnerships could be developed in the coming years. He admitted that India had experienced "a few hiccups" in attempts to reform higher education, but said the current government was committed to opening the sector to investment from foreign universities. Ambassador Meera Shankar added that the U.S. and GOI hoped to initiate a high-level dialogue to include university and private sector readers to suggest recommendations and help facilitate increased collaboration between U.S. and Indian universities (Krishna supported this idea.) Burns commented that the benefits of education cooperation would spill over into other sectors, including science and healthcare

Clean Energy Collaboration

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¶7. (SBU) Both sides concurred that the U.S. and India should explore ways to collaborate on energy and climate change. Burns remarked that together India and the U.S. could promote a "healthier" international dialogue on climate change. Krishna and Burns noted Special Envoy Stern and Saran had begun a healthy dialogue on this and other related subjects. Krishna and Shankar highlighted India's success in developing wind technology and solar power, but admitted that South Asia had not been able to create successful, affordable energy technology. Shankar encouraged her U.S. counterparts to consider smaller projects, such as solar generators, as other possible areas for collaboration.

¶8. (U) Under Secretary Burns cleared this message.
BURLEIGH